



Let's Not Let District Lines Divide Us

Posted by **Pierluigi Oliverio** on Monday, January 07, 2008

City Hall Diary

As I bid 2007 goodbye and welcome 2008, I think of the many issues that my colleagues and I will be working on in one way or another. Whether balancing the budget, protecting our resources like industrial land or implementing the mayor's Green Vision, among others, it will take collaboration, perseverance and, above all else, a good sense of humor to keep us all in check.

As I make my list of resolutions for 2008, I have decided to make an attempt to not get "stuck" in the office. If I really want to learn more about San Jose then I will need to spend time in the field and explore the different facets the city has to offer.

San Jose reminds me of a jigsaw puzzle where the neighborhoods are the pieces and we are trying to make them all fit together. Each neighborhood and district has its own history and demographics that are unique.

All ten districts are drawn according to population. Therefore, when the population changes in each district, the boundaries of the districts are then redrawn. For example, does anyone remember when former Mayor Hammer represented District 3? Well, guess what? Susan hasn't moved but she now she lives in District 6 because district lines fluctuate.

I love my district because I am familiar with it. I was born and raised here and now own a home here. However, insulation is not something that one should base citywide decisions on. I want to challenge myself to go outside of my comfort zone and explore San Jose and all its wonders. Therefore, I have decided to tour each district with its councilmember. This is sort of like "shadowing" different occupations within a company like engineering, marketing, sales, operations, etc.

I could continue to go out on my own and investigate each district; however, I would rather look to the "experts"—my fellow elected

colleagues—for their expertise regarding the districts they represent. Sure, I have lived in San Jose for 38 years, but so many things have changed and will continue to change that I feel touring the districts will be a good start for 2008.

I am in the process of scheduling a tour with each councilmember. I started my tour with Councilmember Madison Nguyen who represents District 7. It was good for me to listen to Madison explain the different areas, points of interest, etc. in her district. The opportunity to listen to my colleague outside of the office on her turf was a great experience for me. I learned so much more from actually being there than I would have by reading a memo.

Life is good in San Jose. I have a feeling that 2008 is going to be a productive year.

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